

Amendments to the Drawings:

FIG 2 has been relabeld as FIG. 2A and FIG. 2B has been added. New FIG. 2B is supported at FIGS. 1 and 2A, and adds no new subject matter.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed December 2, 2004. Applicants thank the examiner for indicating that claims 2 and 3 are allowed and claims 6 and 7 are allowable. Claim 1 has been cancelled and claims 6 and 7 have been amended. The amendments add no new subject matter. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, Applicants submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Drawings

The drawing were objected to for not showing the floor panel being connected to the rear crossmember. Figure 2B has been added to address this issue. Paragraphs [0022], [0053], and [0054] have been amended to reflect the inclusion of Figure 2B and the re-designation of original Figure 2 as replacement Figure 2A.

Claim Objections

Claims 6 and 7 were objected to for including several typographical errors. Claims 6 and 7 have been amended to correct the errors.

Claim Rejections

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by either Takeichi et al. (U.S. 4,966,082) or JP 1-119481. These rejections are traversed. However, to advance this application, claim 1 has been cancelled rendering the anticipation rejections thereof moot. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of cancelled claim 1 in a continuation application.

The outstanding Office Action indicated that claims 6 and 7 would be allowable if they were rewritten so that they do not depend on rejected claims. Accordingly, claim 6 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of original independent claim 1. As such, claim 6 is allowable. Claim 7 depends from claim 6; therefore, it is also allowable.

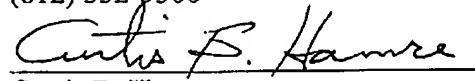
In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution

of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(612) 332-5300

Date: February 2, 2005


Curtis B. Hamre
Reg. No. 29,165
CBH/JEL:sl

